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RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF
DRAWINGS*(Continued)*MAN LEADING A CAMEL, BY REMBRANDT
VAN RIJN

WE will next consider a sheet on which is seen a head of a youth and also a study for a composition (Esther before Ahasuerus?) so closely in the manner of Tintoretto that at first sight it might almost be ascribed to that master. An old inscription "Bassan" probably indicates the real origin of the work. The head is very much in the manner of Leandro Bassano, and though one cannot recall any picture in which he has so closely followed Tintoretto as in this composition, there would be nothing surprising in his making an essay in a manner which was so much in vogue in his lifetime.

To his brother, Francesco Bassano, we may attribute a very typical composition of peasants and cattle in a romantic landscape; it is drawn with great refinement and taste and with a genuinely pictorial sense of the value of tone. Among the Italians of the seventeenth century, Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, though now unduly neglected, held a remarkable place. Born at Genoa in 1616, he came under Van

Dyck's influence during the latter's stay in that city, and learned from him something of the directness and brilliance of Rubens's technique. He was celebrated as the greatest Italian animal draughtsman of his time, and in fact, though his human figures have something of the affectation of his age and country, his animals show a robust and direct power which recalls Rubens. In such compositions as those acquired by the Museum, he shows himself as a follower of the Bassani; in his etchings, he forestalls Tiepolo. Of the three drawings by him, one, *The Prodigal Son*, is in oil or varnished tempera, the others in *gouache*.

One of these, the *Peasants Driving Cattle*, was engraved with slight variations by Zanetti. The engraving is signed "G. Bened. Castiglione, Genuensis, 1758, A.M.Z."

By Giovanni's son, Francesco, are two elaborate drawings of animals with gay and rather crude touches of color. They are decidedly inferior imitations of his father's admirable manner.

A slightly older contemporary of Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione was Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, called Guercino (1590-1666), by whom are two important and characteristic drawings. On one sheet are two studies for a picture of St. William of Burgundy taking the habit of an anchorite at the hands of St. Bernard. The picture of this subject, which Guercino painted for the Church of S. Gregorio in Bologna, agrees in its main lines with these drawings.

The other drawing, though it lacks the brilliant improvised quality of the St. William, is more elaborate and complete. It represents the Adoration of the Magi and shows what indeed one may learn from many of his pictures, that Barbieri acquired much of his art from the Venetians. Here the influence of Titian is paramount.

The skillful massing and distribution of light and shade are essentially those of a colorist. We may pass over some minor Italian drawings which do not call for detailed notice, and consider the drawings of the schools of the Netherlands.

Here, again, there is one drawing that may almost be called primitive, though it dates from about the year 1520. It repre-

sents a group of figures holding hands and dancing round in a ring. On an eminence some musicians are playing, and behind stretches a wide landscape of essentially Northern character in spite of the vague

fifteenth century, while even the folds of the drapery suggest the School of Leonardo da Vinci. Other figures, the men with slashed hose, proclaim a German origin and remind one of Dürer; on the other hand the



THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI, BY GIOVANNI FRANCESCO BARBIERI CALLED GUERCINO

suggestion of mountains in the extreme distance. There is a château with moat and drawbridge and a windmill. It is only on internal evidence that we can arrive at any conclusions about this curious drawing, and these conclusions must for the present remain somewhat indefinite. That it is by a master of considerable distinction and power is evident from the fine characterization of the figures and the easy, expressive use of line. The costumes show a curious admixture of Dutch, German, and North Italian. One of the figures, that of a woman in the foreground with her hair twisted into a long queue behind, might almost be taken from a drawing by Ambrogio de Predis, so exactly does it follow the Lombard fashions of the end of the

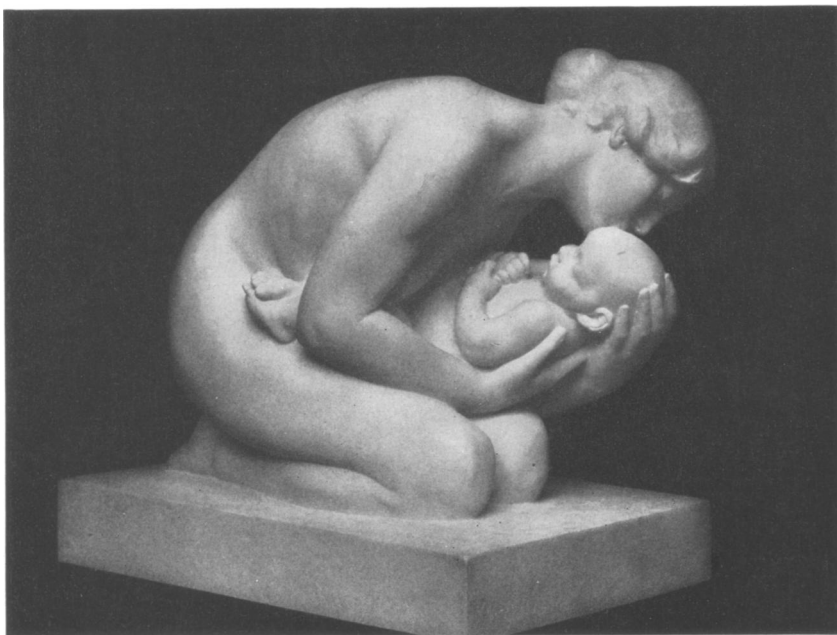
majority of the types are clearly Dutch, and the landscape bears out the general conclusion that this is the work of a Dutch artist probably of the Leyden school, who, like Lucas van Leyden himself, was beginning to forsake the native tradition for an eclectic manner. The peculiar mixture of influences which we find in this interesting drawing finds a curious parallel in the large picture ascribed to Lucas van Leyden belonging to the Marquand Collection and now hanging in Gallery 11. This drawing is also being reproduced by the Vasari Society.

The second drawing of the Dutch School must rank among the more important of the recent acquisitions. It is a pen-and-ink drawing by Rembrandt and represents

a man leading a laden camel. In the background is a suggestion of a second camel, and to the left the silhouettes of three sheep. The drawing was in the collections of Sir Joshua Reynolds, R. Holditch, and Sir James Knowles. It is No. 1069 in Hofstede de Groot's *Catalogue of Rembrandt's Drawings*. It is needless to point out the extraordinary mastery shown in this rapid but complete study: the perfect understanding of the camel's shuffling gait and the suggestion of the swaying weight of the paniers. As always in Rembrandt's better drawings, even the slightest indication becomes functional and expressive, and one is left in amazement at the imaginative force which could so entirely control to its purposes the most rapid and least conscious movements of the artist's hand.

Two drawings, presumably for tapestries, by Van der Meulen, complete the Netherlandish drawings. They are excellent and capable but uninspired work of just the kind that Le Brun, who called Van der Meulen to his aid, would appreciate in his capacity as director of a great art industry. Van der Meulen was born in Brussels, 1632, and was trained there, but attracting the notice of Le Brun was called to Paris to work at the Gobelins' in designing the great series of tapestries representing the Campaigns of Louis XIV. One of these scenes, with a Flemish city in the background, probably was a design for one of these tapestries or perhaps for the decorations of the château of Marly, in which Van der Meulen painted a series of Louis' siege in Flanders.

(To be continued.)



MOTHER, BY ARTHUR LEWIN-FUNKE
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